

GENERAL ORDERS, }  
No. 18. }

WAR DEPARTMENT,  
ADJUTANT GENERAL'S OFFICE,  
*Washington, January 22, 1863.*

I.. Before a General Court Martial, which convened in the city of Washington, D. C., November 27, 1862, pursuant to "Special Orders," No. 362, dated Headquarters of the Army, November 25, 1862, and of which Major General D. HUNTER, U. S. Volunteers, is President, was arraigned and tried—

Major General *Fitz-John Porter*, U. S. Volunteers.

CHARGE 1st.—"Violation of the 9th Article of War."

*Specification 1st*—"In this; that the said Major General *Fitz-John Porter*, of the Volunteers of the United States, having received a lawful order, on or about the 27th August, 1862, while at or near Warrenton Junction, in Virginia, from Major General John Pope, his superior and Commanding Officer, in the following figures and letters, to wit:

'HEADQUARTERS ARMY OF VIRGINIA,  
'*August 27, 1862, 6.30 p. m.,*  
'*Bristow Station.*

'Major General F. J. PORTER,  
*Warrenton Junction.*

'GENERAL: The Major General Commanding directs that you start at one o'clock to-night and come forward with your whole corps, or such part of it as is with you, so as to be here by daylight to-morrow morning. Hooker has had a very severe action with the enemy, with a loss of about three hundred killed and wounded. The enemy has been driven back, but is retiring along the railroad. We must drive him from Manassas, and clear the country between that place and Gainesville, where McDowell is. If Morell has not joined you, send word to him to push forward immediately; also send word to Banks to hurry forward with all speed, to take your place at Warrenton Junction. It is necessary, on all accounts, that you should be here by daylight. I send an officer with this despatch, who will conduct you to this place. Be sure to send word to Banks, who is on the road from Fayetteville, probably in the direction of Bealton. Say to Banks, also, that he had best run back the railroad train

to this side of Cedar Run. If he is not with you, write him to to that effect.

‘By command of Major General Pope:

(Signed)

‘GEO. D. RUGGLES,

‘Colonel and Chief of Staff.

‘P. S.—If Banks is not at Warrenton Junction, leave a regiment of infantry and two pieces of artillery, as a guard till he comes up, with instructions to follow you immediately. If Banks is not at the Junction, instruct Colonel Clary to run the trains back to this side of Cedar Run, and post a regiment and section of artillery with it

‘By command of Major General Pope:

(Signed)

‘GEO. D. RUGGLES,

‘Colonel and Chief of Staff.’

Did then and there disobey the said order, being at the time in the face of the enemy. This at or near Warrenton, in the State of Virginia, on or about the 28th of August, 1862.”

*Specification 2d*—“In this: that the said Major General *Fitz-John Porter*, being in front of the enemy, at Manassas, Virginia, on or about the morning of August 29, 1862, did receive from Major General John Pope, his superior and Commanding Officer, a lawful order, in the following letters and figures, to wit:

‘HEADQUARTERS ARMY OF VIRGINIA,

‘Centreville, August 29, 1862.

‘Generals McDOWELL AND PORTER:

‘You will please move forward with your joint commands towards Gainesville. I sent General Porter written orders to that effect an hour and a half ago. Heintzelman, Sigel, and Reno are moving on the Warrenton turnpike, and must now be not far from Gainesville. I desire that, as soon as communication is established between this force and your own, the whole command shall halt. It may be necessary to fall back behind Bull Run at Centreville to-night. I presume it will be so on account of our supplies. I have sent no orders of any description to Ricketts, and none to interfere in any way with the movements of McDowell’s troops, except what I sent by his Aide-de-Camp last night, which were to hold his position on

the Warrenton pike until the troops from here should fall on the enemy's flank and rear. I do not even know Ricketts' position, as I have not been able to find out where General McDowell was until a late hour this morning. General McDowell will take immediate steps to communicate with General Ricketts, and instruct him to join the other divisions of his corps as soon as practicable. If any considerable advantages are to be gained by departing from this order, it will not be strictly carried out. One thing must be held in view: that the troops must occupy a position from which they can reach Bull Run to-night or by morning. The indications are that the whole force of the enemy is moving in this direction at a pace that will bring them here by to-morrow night or the next day. My own headquarters will for the present be with Heintzelman's corps, or at this place.

(Signed)

'JOHN POPE,

*'Major General Commanding.'*

Which order the said Major General *Porter* did then and there disobey. This at or near Manassas, in the State of Virginia, on or about the 29th of August, 1862."

*Specification 3d*—"In this; that the said Major General *Fitz-John Porter*, having been in front of the enemy during the battle of Manassas, on Friday, the 29th of August, 1862, did on that day receive from Major General John Pope, his superior and Commanding Officer, a lawful order, in the following letters and figures, to wit:

'HEADQUARTERS IN THE FIELD,

*'August 29, 1862, 4.30 p. m.*

'Major General PORTER:

'Your line of march brings you in on the enemy's right flank. I desire you to push forward into action at once on the enemy's flank, and, if possible, on his rear, keeping your right in communication with General Reynolds. The enemy is massed in the woods in front of us, but can be shelled out as soon as you engage their flank. Keep heavy reserves, and use your batteries, keeping well closed to your right all the time. In case you are obliged to fall back, do so to your right and rear, so as to keep you in close communication with the right wing.

(Signed)

'JOHN POPE,

*'Major General Commanding.'*

Which said order the said Major General *Porter* did then and there disobey, and did fail to push forward his forces into action either on the enemy's flank or rear, and in all other respects did fail to obey said order. This at or near Manassas, in the State of Virginia, on or about the 29th of August, 1862."

*Specification 4th*—"In that the said Major General *Fitz-John Porter*, being at or near Manassas Junction on the night of 29th August, 1862, did receive from Major General John Pope, his superior and Commanding Officer, a lawful order, in figures and words as follows, to wit:

'HEADQUARTERS ARMY OF VIRGINIA,

'*In the field, near Bull Run,*

'*August 29, 1862, 8.50 p. m.*

'Major General F. J. PORTER:

'GENERAL: Immediately upon receipt of this order, the precise hour of receiving which you will acknowledge, you will march your command to the field of battle of to-day, and report to me in person for orders. You are to understand that you are expected to comply strictly with this order, and to be present on the field within three hours after its reception, or after daybreak to-morrow morning.

(Signed)

'JOHN POPE,

'*Major General Commanding.*'

And the said Major General *Fitz-John Porter* did then and there disobey the said order, and did permit one of the brigades of his command to march to Centreville—out of the way of the field of battle—and there to remain during the entire day of Saturday, the 30th of August. This at or near Manassas Station, in the State of Virginia, on the 29th and 30th days of August, 1862."

*Specification 5th*—"In this; that the said Major General *Fitz-John Porter*, being at or near Manassas Station, in the State of Virginia, on the night of the 29th August, 1862, and having received from his superior Commanding Officer, Major General John Pope, the lawful order set forth in specification fourth to this charge, did then and there disobey the same, and did permit



one other brigade attached to his command—being the brigade commanded by Brigadier General A. S. Piatt—to march to Centreville, and did thereby greatly delay the arrival of the said General Piatt's brigade on the field of battle of Manassas, on Saturday, the 30th August, 1862. This at or near Manassas, in the State of Virginia, on or about the 29th day of August, 1862."

CHARGE 2d.—"Violation of the 52d Article of War."

*Specification* 1st—"In this; that the said Major General *Fitz-John Porter*, during the battle of Manassas, on Friday the 29th August, 1862, and while within sight of the field, and in full hearing of its artillery, did receive from Major General John Pope, his superior and Commanding Officer, a lawful order to attack the enemy, in the following figures and letters, to wit:

'HEADQUARTERS IN THE FIELD,

'August 29, 1862, 4.30 p. m.

'Major General PORTER:

'Your line of march brings you in on the enemy's right flank. I desire you to push forward into action at once on the enemy's flank, and if possible on his rear, keeping your right in communication with General Reynolds. The enemy is massed in the woods in front of us, but can be shelled out as soon as you engage their flank. Keep heavy reserves, and use your batteries, keeping well closed to your right all the time. In case you are obliged to fall back, do so to your right and rear, so as to keep you in close communication with the right wing.

(Signed)

'JOHN POPE.

'*Major General Commanding.*'

Which said order the said Major General *Porter* did then and there shamefully disobey, and did retreat from advancing forces of the enemy without any attempt to engage them, or to aid the troops who were already fighting greatly superior numbers, and were relying on the flank attack he was thus ordered to make to secure a decisive victory, and to capture the enemy's army, a result which must have followed from said flank attack, had it been made by the said General *Porter* in compliance with the said order, which he so shamefully disobeyed. This at or near

Manassas, in the State of Virginia, on or about the 29th of August, 1862."

*Specification 2d*—"In this; that the said Major General *Fitz-John Porter*, being with his Army Corps on Friday, the 29th August, 1862, between Manassas Station and the field of a battle then pending between the forces of the United States and those of the rebels, and within sound of the guns and in the presence of the enemy, and knowing that a severe action of great consequence was being fought, and that the aid of his corps was greatly needed, did fail all day to bring it on to the field, and did shamefully fall back and retreat from the advance of the enemy without any attempt to give them battle, and without knowing the forces from which he shamefully retreated. This near Manassas Station, in the State of Virginia, on the 29th of August, 1862."

*Specification 3d*—"In that the said Major General *Fitz-John Porter*, being with his Army Corps near the field of battle of Manassas, on the 29th August, 1862, while a severe action was being fought by the troops of Major General Pope's command, and being in the belief that the troops of the said general Pope were sustaining defeat and retiring from the field, did shamefully fail to go to the aid of the said troops and general, and did shamefully retreat away and fall back with his army to the Manassas Junction, and leave to the disasters of a presumed defeat the said army; and did fail, by any attempt to attack the enemy, to aid in averting the misfortunes of a disaster that would have endangered the safety of the capital of the country. This at or near Manassas Station, in the State of Virginia, on the 29th day of August, 1862."

*Specification 4th*—"In this; that the said Major General *Fitz-John Porter*, on the field of battle of Manassas, on Saturday, the 30th August, 1862, having received a lawful order from his superior officer and Commanding General, Major General John Pope, to engage the enemy's lines and to carry a position near their centre, and to take an annoying battery there posted, did proceed in the execution of that order with unnecessary slowness, and by delays give the enemy opportunities to watch and know his movements, and to prepare to meet his attack; and did finally

so feebly fall upon the enemy's lines as to make little or no impression on the same, and did fall back and draw away his forces unnecessarily, and without making any of the great personal efforts to rally his troops or to keep their lines, or to inspire his troops to meet the sacrifices and to make the resistance demanded by the importance of his position, and the momentous consequences and disasters of a retreat at so critical a juncture of the day."

To which charges and specifications the accused, Major General *Fitz-John Porter*, U. S. Volunteers, pleaded as follows:

#### CHARGE FIRST.

To *Specification 1st*, "Not Guilty."

To *Specification 2d*, "Not Guilty."

To *Specification 3d*, "Not Guilty."

To *Specification 4th*, "Not Guilty."

To *Specification 5th*, "Not Guilty."

And to the CHARGE, "Not Guilty."

#### CHARGE SECOND.

To *Specification 1st*, "Not Guilty."

To *Specification 2d*, "Not Guilty."

To *Specification 3d*, "Not Guilty."

And to the CHARGE, "Not Guilty."

#### FINDING.

The Court, having maturely considered the evidence adduced, finds the accused, Major General *Fitz-John Porter*, of United States Volunteers, as follows:

#### CHARGE FIRST.

Of the 1st *Specification*, "Guilty."

Of the 2d *Specification*, "Guilty."

Of the 3d *Specification*, "Guilty."

Of the 4th *Specification*, "Not Guilty."

Of the 5th *Specification*, "Not Guilty."

Of the 1st CHARGE, "Guilty."

#### CHARGE SECOND.

Of the 1st *Specification*, "Guilty, except so much of the specification as implies that he, the accused, 'did retreat from advancing forces of

the enemy,' *after* the receipt of the order set forth in said specification."

Of the 2d *Specification*, "Guilty."

Of the 3d *Specification*, "Guilty, except the words 'to the Manassas Junction.'"

Of the 2d *CHARGE*, "Guilty."

#### SENTENCE.

And the Court does therefore sentence him, Major General *Fitz-John Porter*, of the United States Volunteers, "*To be cashiered, and to be forever disqualified from holding any office of trust or profit under the Government of the United States.*"

II..In compliance with the 65th of the Rules and Articles of War, the whole proceedings of the General Court Martial in the foregoing case have been transmitted to the Secretary of War, and by him laid before the President of the United States.

The following are the orders of the President:

The foregoing proceedings, findings, and sentence in the foregoing case of Major General *Fitz-John Porter*, are approved and confirmed; and it is ordered that the said *Fitz-John Porter* be, and he hereby is, cashiered and dismissed from the service of the United States as a Major General of Volunteers, and as Colonel and Brevet Brigadier General in the Regular Service of the United States, and forever disqualified from holding any office of trust or profit under the Government of the United States.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN.

JANUARY 21, 1863.

III..The General Court Martial, of which Major General *HUNTER* is President, is hereby dissolved.

BY ORDER OF THE SECRETARY OF WAR:

L. THOMAS,  
*Adjutant General.*

OFFICIAL:

*Assistant Adjutant General.*